

INTRODUCTION OF THE PATIENT
NAVIGATOR, OUTREACH, AND
CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION
ACT OF 2002

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be joined by my Colleague from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, to introduce the Patient Navigator, Outreach, and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2002.

The existence of significant health disparities in this nation is undeniable. For years, research has told us that minorities and low-income populations are the least likely to receive the health care they need to live a long, healthy life. We've done a very good job of identifying this problem—it's high time we do something to solve it.

That's why I'm very excited about the bill we are introducing today and the strong support we've already received for it. The bill is supported by the American Cancer Society, the National Association of Community Health Centers, the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, the National Hispanic Medical Association, the Intercultural Cancer Council and their Caucus, the National Council of La Raza, 100 Black Men of America, the National Rural Health Association, Dean and Betty Gallo Prostate Cancer Center, MHz Networks, Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, and Dia de la Mujer Latina, Inc.

This bill addresses what I believe are the root causes of health disparities in minority and underserved communities: lack of access to health care in general—and particularly lack of access to prevention and early detection—as well as language and cultural barriers to care.

The bottom line is: the only way to stay healthy is to see a doctor when you are healthy. Yes, there are a number of explanations for the higher rates of disease among minority populations, including higher rates of uninsured, reduced access to care, and lower quality of care. But all of these barriers point to the same underlying problem—minority patients are less likely to receive early screening and detection, so their disease is found at a much later stage and they have less chance of survival.

The bill we're introducing today will ensure that all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, or geography, will have access to prevention screening and treatment, and that they will have an advocate at their side, helping them navigate through today's complicated health care system.

It does this by building upon the existing infrastructure of the Consolidated Health Center program, the Indian Health Service, the Office of Rural Health Policy, and the National Cancer Institute.

It creates model programs to ensure that people are educated about the importance of prevention screening and early detection. A key component of the proposal is year-round outreach to the target community, in a language that they can understand.

It funds culturally and linguistically competent providers that reach out into the community, build their trust, build relationships, and educate the public, while providing prevention screenings and follow-up treatment.

And it ensures that navigators are available to help patients make their way through the health care system—whether it's translating technical medical terminology, making sense of their insurance, making appointments for referral screenings, following-up to make sure the patient keeps that appointment, or even accompanying a patient to a referral appointment.

The original concept for the legislation comes from Dr. Freeman's "navigator" program, which he created while he was Director of Surgery at Harlem Hospital. Recently, I was fortunate to get to visit Dr. Huerta's local Cancer Preventorium, which replicates Dr. Freeman's navigator concept within a comprehensive model of prevention services. This bill will translate the work of Dr. Harold Freeman and Dr. Elmer Huerta into a legislative model for cancer and chronic disease prevention and treatment for minorities and underserved communities.

The track record of these programs speaks for itself. It's very clear that these are not new ideas or new concepts—they're models that have been proven to work. And it's time that we take what's worked and use it to benefit underserved populations across the country. That's exactly what this legislation will do.

TRIBUTE TO MARILYN
FAGERSTROM

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues know, in Colorado we are experiencing some of the worst wildfires in our state's history. We owe an enormous debt to the men and women who have heroically battled these blazes to save lives, protect homes, and lessen the damage to other resources.

In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize one such firefighter, Ms. Marilyn Fagerstrom. Ms. Fagerstrom is an example of the people who always strive to use their abilities to make positive contributions to their communities.

At 71 years of age, Marilyn Fagerstrom is an esteemed firefighter—and a grandmother of six. After having moved to the mountains nearly twenty years ago, Ms. Fagerstrom decided that becoming a volunteer firefighter was the best way to give back to her community. Through the years she has stood shoulder to shoulder with firefighters who, more often than not, were much her junior.

In recent days, she has been tirelessly working to help fight the Big Elk wildfire burning between Estes Park and Lyons, Colorado. It has been said that Marilyn Fagerstrom does more in retirement than many people do during their careers. As such, she is a source of inspiration deserving of our respect and commendations.

For my colleagues' interest, I have attached a news story about Ms. Fagerstrom's firefighting efforts. I ask my colleagues to join with me today in honoring Marilyn Fagerstrom for her spirit, service and tenacity. I wish her continued health and happiness.

[Denver Post Northern Colorado Bureau]
71-YEAR-OLD STAYS YOUNG FIGHTING FIRES

(By Coleman Cornelius)

Sunday, July 21, 2002—LYONS—Marilyn Fagerstrom's graying hair, pearl earrings and round spectacles form the image of a grandmother. Then there are her Nomex fire-retardant shirt and black lug-soled boots.

Fagerstrom is 71 years old, a grandmother of six—and an esteemed firefighter. She is the oldest firefighter among nearly 400 at the Big Elk blaze and a veteran of the Hayman wildfire. Fagerstrom began fighting fires at age 53, when she retired to a mountain home northwest of Boulder and realized it was the best way to give back to her wildfire-prone community.

"I suddenly realized I live in an area that could burn. I began investigating. 'Do we have a fire department? What's going on?'" said Fagerstrom, a former physical-education teacher. Fagerstrom quickly joined the Lefthand Fire Protection District, a volunteer force that responds to blazes primarily in Boulder County. As part of the district's engine team, she drives the heavy rig, hauls hoses and sprays down threatened homes and structures with water and fire retardant. In the devastating fire season of 2000, she spent six straight weeks in the field on wildfires including the monster at Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado. She slept in tents, bathed in portable showers and ate elbow-to-elbow with sweaty, soot-smudged firefighters, many of whom are younger men and women.

At the Big Elk wildfire, Fagerstrom has an office job. She works as an information officer for the federal team managing fire response.

Her engine crew was in the field protecting homes in the Big Elk Meadows subdivision as Fagerstrom came through leading a media tour.

"She brings us intelligence, charm, wit, wisdom and experience—definitely experience," Lefthand volunteer David Keyek said of Fagerstrom.

Added Dave Nyquist, chief of the Lefthand Fire Protection District: "Marilyn is one of those people who makes things work. She's busier in retirement than most people are in their normal jobs."

Fagerstrom said she has made firefighting her life because it allows her to experience camaraderie, adrenaline-laced physical challenge and the reward of helping others. She also wears the hats of information officer and treasurer for the Lefthand Fire Protection District. "It keeps me going. I'm not ready to sit in the rocker yet," she said with a laugh.

A TRIBUTE TO STANLEY "MIKE"
LARSON: FINALLY COMING HOME

HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, fifty-seven years after he died on December 16, 1944 in the Battle of the Bulge, Stanley Larson finally received the funeral reserved for heroes.

He was just a 19-year-old kid, one year out of high school, looking forward to the same things all kids want: lasting friendships, a good job, a loving family. War has a tendency to permanently interrupt dreams of young men. One such was Stanley Larson of Rochelle, a resident of the same county where I live.

I had the opportunity to present an American flag to Stanley's family, the least I could do on behalf of a grateful America.